

REMARKS

Status of the claims:

Claims 1-4 and 6-20 are pending and ready for further action on the merits. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

Rejections under 35 USC §103

Claims 1-3, 6-7, 9-10, 12-13 and 20 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Weiss '550 (US Patent No. 4,028,550) in view of Leblans '578 (US Patent No. 5,360,578).

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Weiss '550 in view of Leblans '578 and further in view of Jamil '916 (US Patent No. 5,772,916).

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Weiss '550 in view of Leblans '578 and further in view of Ochiai '971 (US Patent No. 4,501,971).

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Weiss '550 in view of Leblans '578 and further in view of Hultsch '454 (US Patent No. 4,405,454).

Applicant traverses.

Present Invention

The present invention, as recited in claim 1, relates to a method for manufacturing a radiation image conversion panel, comprising the steps of:

- a) dispersing a calcined product of stimuable phosphor in a dispersion medium, to obtain a slurry;
- b) eliminating grains that are of at least a predetermined size from the slurry of step a), using wet classification wherein a final mesh in the wet classification is no more than 50 μm ;
- c) adding to the slurry of step b), a binder that is substantially soluble therein, to prepare a coating material; and
- d) applying the coating material to a support and drying to thereby form a phosphor layer.

Removal of the Rejections over Weiss '550 in view of Leblans '578 and further in view of any of Jamil '916, Ochiai '971, or Hultsch '454

As was pointed out in the response of November 20, 2003, the phosphor in Weiss '550 is not a "stimulable" phosphor but is rather a conventional phosphor, whose properties are not changed by milling.

Leblans '578 uses a ball mill in the process of preparing phosphor particles. Please see column 11, lines 22-25. Accordingly, if one were to use the method of milling taught in

Leblans '578 with the phosphor of Weiss '550, the stimulability of phosphor would be destroyed even though finer particles would be obtained. If the process of Leblans '578 were not applied to the phosphor of Weiss '550, finer particles of phosphor would not be obtained because of the higher viscosity. Accordingly, the instant invention cannot be rendered obvious by any of Weiss '550 and/or Leblans '578.

To show that phosphor loses its stimuable property when an external force, for example, mixing using a Turbula® Shaker-Mixer is applied to it, Applicant herein attaches a 37 CFR §1.132 declaration executed by Masaharu Nakatsu. Applicant submits that it is known in the art that mixing using a Turbula® Shaker-Mixer can substitute for ball milling. The Examiner's attention is directed to the following website that discloses that a Turbula® Shaker-Mixer can be used for ball milling: www.glenmills.com/product_showcase. Applicant, herein, attaches a document from this web site showing that the Turbula® Shaker-Mixer can be used for ball milling.

Turning to the particular experiments that were performed, the Examiner's attention is drawn to the table on page 3 of the declaration wherein it is shown that the relative strength of the stimuable emission light is greatly attenuated after mixing. In other words, phosphor loses its stimuable property when an external force (e.g., ball milling) is applied to it.

With this showing, Applicant submits that neither Weiss '550 nor Leblans '578 can render obvious the instant invention, either used individually or together. The other cited references (i.e., Jamil '916, Ochiai '971, and Hultsch '454) do not make up for the deficiencies present in the combination of Weiss '550 and Leblans '578. Accordingly, the rejections are inapposite. Withdrawal of the rejections is warranted and respectfully requested.


With the above remarks, Applicant believes that the claims, as they now stand, define patentable subject matter such that passage of the instant invention to allowance is warranted. A Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If any questions remain regarding the above matters, please contact Applicant's representative, T. Benjamin Schroeder (Reg. No. 50,990), in the Washington metropolitan area at the phone number listed below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 
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Attachment: Declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.132 by
Mr. Masaharu Nakatsu
Document from www.glenmills.com/product_showcase